

Micro magic



Mitsubishi model range swells with all-new ASX mini-SUV, priced from \$25,990

By MARTON PETTENDY

MITSUBISHI has landed its hotly anticipated ASX mini-crossover Down Under at a starting price of \$25,990, pitching the all-new sub-Outlander baby SUV neatly between its two most direct rivals, the Nissan Dualis (from \$24,990) and Hyundai's ix35 (from \$26,990).

On sale here from August 1, the compact five-door wagon range includes petrol and diesel engines, manual and automatic transmissions, all-wheel drive and front-drive configurations and well-specified entry-level and flagship model variants.

Based on the same 'GS' global small-car platform as the Lancer and Outlander, the ASX – which stands for Active Smart Crossover – shares the same 2670mm wheelbase as the larger Outlander but has a lower roofline, much shorter rear overhang, more modest ground clearance of 195mm (versus 210mm) and kerb weights ranging

between 1345kg and 1525kg – about 200kg less than the Outlander.

Although Mitsubishi is happy to label it as overkill in this market segment, the ASX is also available with the same AWD system as the Outlander, comprising selectable 2WD, 4WD and (50/50) Lock modes and an electric rear coupling that

PRICING:	
2WD petrol	\$25,990
2WD petrol (a)	\$28,490
4WD diesel	\$31,990
4WD petrol (a)	\$31,990
Aspire 4WD diesel	\$36,990
Aspire 4WD petrol (a)	\$36,990

employs steering angle and wheel speed sensors to distribute engine torque front to rear.

Brakes are also lifted from the larger and heavier Outlander, and while the ASX uses a variation of the same suspension (with 2mm-thinner anti-roll bars), the new model is unique in its use of an electric power steering system.

All ASX models come with no fewer than seven airbags – twin front, front-side, side curtain and a segment-first driver's knee airbag – while ASC electronic stability control, ATC traction control and ABS brakes (multi-mode for AWD versions) with

EBD are also fitted across the range.

Unlike the Outlander, a hill-start assist function comes with both automatic and manual transmissions.

Mitsubishi is confident that ANCAP crash testing will confirm a maximum five-star safety rating for all ASX models when the results are revealed at the end of this month, with items like plastic front quarter guards expected to help it achieve a high three-star pedestrian safety rating.

Passenger car-like noise, vibration and harshness levels are claimed to have been achieved in this iteration of Mitsubishi's Reinforced Impact Safety Evolution (RISE) body construction by foam-filled A, B and C-pillars and extensive floor and engine bay sound deadening.

Opening the ASX range at below \$26,000 is the 2WD petrol manual, powered by the Lancer's MIVEC 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine, which delivers 110kW of power at 6000rpm and 197Nm of torque at 4200rpm.

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Mated to a five-speed manual transmission, the base ASX returns average fuel consumption of 7.7 litres per 100km – less than both the 2WD Dualis (8.1L/100km) and ix35 (8.5L/100km), as well as Volkswagen's Tiguan (9.1L/100km).

Matched with the Lancer's six-speed continuously variable transmission (CVT), which is a \$2500 option, the ASX petrol auto returns 7.9L/100km, while the \$31,990 ASX 4WD petrol is a CVT-only proposition that returns 8.1L/100km.

More economical than all petrol variants is the AWD-only, six-speed manual-only ASX 4WD diesel, which returns Toyota Camry Hybrid-beating fuel consumption of just 5.8L/100km and comes with the same pricetag as the ASX 4WD CVT petrol. Mitsubishi says that makes it the lowest priced diesel SUV available, bar the SsangYong Actyon (\$26,990).

Under the diesel ASX's bonnet is the first application of Mitsubishi's own 1.8-litre DiD four-cylinder intercooled turbo-diesel engine, which delivers the same 110kW as the petrol engine (this time at 4000rpm) and a more muscular 300Nm of torque at 2000rpm – up 103Nm.

Like the ASX's petrol engine, the lightweight, all-alloy 16-valve 4N13 diesel has practically square cylinder dimensions,



but employs variable turbo geometry, common-rail direct-injection technology and MIVEC variable valve timing (a first for a diesel passenger car), and meets the Euro 5 emissions standard that will not come into force in Australia until at least 2013.

Offering light-car economy in an AWD SUV (Mitsubishi's own Colt returns 5.6L/100km), the ASX diesel emits just 154 grams of CO₂ per kilometre – less than the diesel version of the ix35 (7.5L/100km, 198g/km) and Tiguan (7.4L/100km, 195g/km), easily making it the cleanest and most efficient in its class.

Apart from the full gamut of safety equipment, standard features across the range includes 16x6.5-inch alloy wheels

with 215/65 tyres, roof rails, automatic climate-control air-conditioning, cruise control, a trip computer, rake- and reach-adjustable steering wheel, a four-speaker AM/FM/CD/MP3 player with auxiliary and USB inputs, driver's seat height adjustment and power windows/mirrors.

For \$500, a 'Convenience Pack' all but brings the base 2WD variants up to 4WD spec by including Bluetooth 2.0 operation with voice control, reverse parking sensors, chromed exhaust outlets and steering wheel audio and phone controls.

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